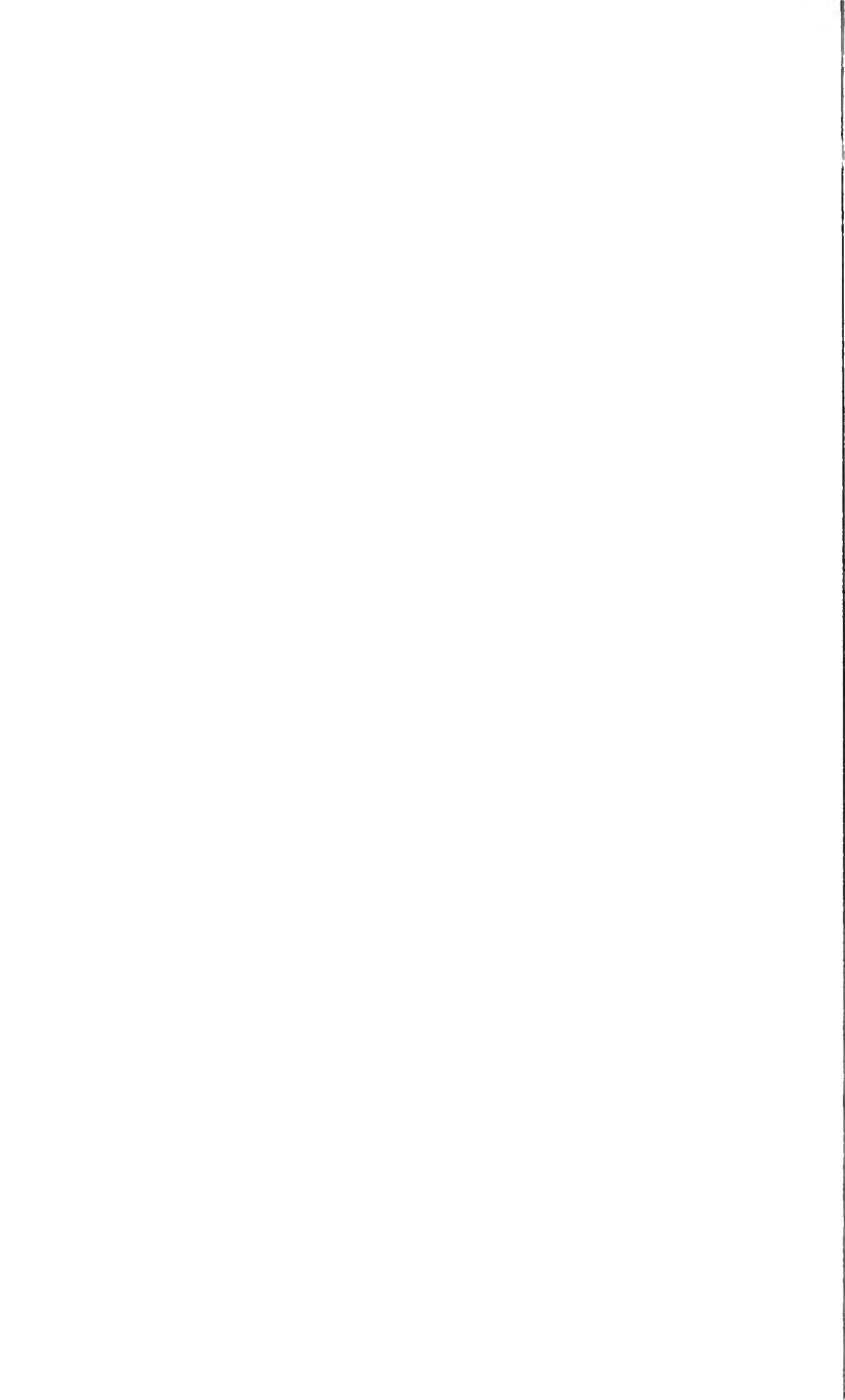




John M. Yot L.

July 1977



SOME BRIEF

# CONSIDERATIONS

UPON

Mr. *LOCKE*'s Hypothesis,

That the Knowledge of GOD is attainable by  
Ideas of Reflexion.

Wherein is Demonstrated,

Upon his own PRINCIPLES,

That the Knowledge of GOD is not  
attainable by Ideas of Reflexion.

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Being an Addition to a Book lately Publish'd,  
Entitled, *The Knowledge of Divine Things from  
Revelation, not from Nature or Reason.*

By the AUTHOR of the said BOOK.

— *Ellis*

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L O N D O N,


Printed by *J. Watts*: And sold by *B. Dod* at the Bible and  
Key in *Ave-Mary-Lane* near *Stationers-Hall*, *J. Fletcher*  
at *Oxford*, and *T. Merrill* at *Cambridge*. MDCCLIII.

## E R R A T A.

- P. 7. l. 31. *after* moved *for* with *read* which.  
 p. 11. l. 4. *read* p. 332.  
 p. 15. l. 5. *after* Extension *dele* ,  
 p. 17. l. ult. *after* Beings *add* by Ideas of Reflexion  
 p. 19. l. 2. *after* nothing *add* out  
 p. 21. l. 1. *for* of *read* at  
           l. 26. *for* adequate *read* inadequate  
 p. 35. l. 17. *after* Idea of *for* the *read* that  
 p. 39. l. 6. *for* 137 *read* 317.  
 p. 40. l. 7. *that is, not at all.*   *Should not have been in*  
                                   *Italic Letters.*  
 p. 41. l. 14. *Should be pointed thus, nor wherein they consist,*  
                                   *that we can have no Ideas: Where no Ideas,*  
                                   *none at all, that we can have no knowledge:*  
                                   *Where no Knowledge is &c.*  
 p. 48. l. 19. *after* established *instead of* *for* *read* by



# P R E F A C E.

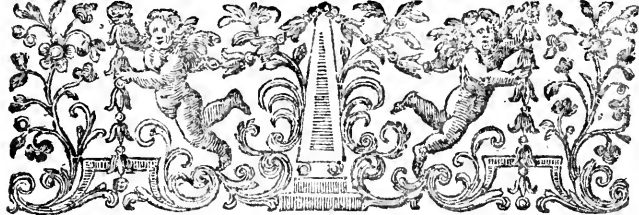
HE Motive for putting these few Sheets together, and offering them to the Publick, arose from a Conversation with some Friends, who, after perusing my Book, were of Opinion, that what was there said on Ideas of Reflexion, had not been particularly enough applied to Mr. *Locke's* Hypothesis, with the Infallibility of which the present Age was universally prepossessed. Whence I concluded, that as those Gentlemen wanted some farther Satisfaction in this Point, so might others : And for that purpose I drew up the following Notes with a regard had only to Mr. *Locke's* Essay.

I am fully sensible of the Danger to which any Attack on that celebrated Work must be exposed : But hope a real Love for Truth will be a sufficient Apology to all learned and impartial Men, who prepare their Minds seriously to search after and receive it from whatever Hand it comes : My inward Satisfaction is, to have enquired after it impartially, and offer'd nothing but from a thorough Conviction, *That Man can have no Knowledge of*  
God,

*God, but what comes directly from God. A Truth, which I think dearer than Socrates, stronger than Mr. Locke; and that to support it, is to plead the Cause of that God whom we serve, and of his Revelation, which we ought to believe. They who shall judge me mistaken, may have Charity enough to allow me a Sincerity of Intention.*

The first Sections I chiefly consider as preparatory to the two last Arguments, which are of the greatest Importance to Religion and Truth; and if they appear to others as directly conclusive as they do to me, (from Mr. *Locke's* own Principles and Positions: “ That Man cannot come at the Knowledge  
“ of God, nor consequently of his own great  
“ Concernments, from contemplating the Ope-  
“ rations of his Soul, or the Works of Crea-  
“ tion;”) my Inference will be just, That Ideas of Reflexion are vain and useless to all the Purposes of Divine Knowledge, and that there is no other Method left of coming thereat, but by INSTRUCTION.





SOME BRIEF

# CONSIDERATIONS

UPON

Mr. *LOCKE*'s Hypothesis,

Wherein is demonstrated, upon his own Principles, that the Knowledge of God is not attainable by Ideas of Reflexion.

[See *Locke of Human Understanding*, Edit. 5. Lond. 1700.]

**W**HEREAS Ideas of Reflexion have not, in the Opinion of some, long contented with an implicit Submission to Mr. *Locke*'s Philosophy, received a sufficient Answer in my Book of *the Knowledge of Divine Things*, p. 131. I shall, for the sake of Truth, (an impartial Enquiry into which is my only View,)

*First*, Briefly state the Hypothesis in his own Words.

*Secondly*, Offer some Reasons why I think the Mind cannot, by such Ideas, come at the Knowledge of any unknown Object, which has a real Existence in Nature.

**B**

*Thirdly*,

*Thirdly*, I shall endeavour to shew, that we cannot, from any such reflexive or other Operation of the Mind, attain the Knowledge of God, that great and fundamental Article whereon all other spiritual Truths depend.

To trace this Subject from the Fountain-head, it must be observed, *That the Mind in all its Thoughts, hath no other immediate Object but its own Ideas, so that all our Knowledge is conversant about them*, l. 4. c. 1. §. 1. p. 313. *And that Ideas are whatever the Mind can be employ'd about in thinking*, l. 1. c. 1. §. 8. p. 4. *There are but two kinds of Ideas, of Sensation and Reflexion. The Senses at first let in particular Ideas, to furnish the yet unfurnished Cabinet*, l. 1. c. 2. §. 15. *And Ideas of Sensation are those of sensible Qualities, which come from without by the Senses*, l. 2. c. 12. §. 2. p. 79. *and are derived by them to the Understanding*, l. 2. c. 1. §. 3. p. 41. *Ideas of Reflexion are such only as the Mind gets by reflecting on its own Operations within itself; Reflexion being that Notice which the Mind takes of its own Operations, and the Manner of them*, l. 2. c. 1. §. 4. p. 42. *Beyond these Ideas received from their proper Sources of Sensation and Reflexion, our Faculties will not reach: These are the Boundaries of our Thoughts, beyond which, the Mind, whatever Efforts it would make, is not able to advance one Foot, nor can it make any Discoveries into the Nature and hidden Causes of these Ideas*, l. 2. c. 22. §. 29. p. 129. See also §. 2.

*The Ideas of Reflexion (i. e. the Perception of the Operations of our own Minds) are Perception, Thinking, Doubting, Believing, Reasoning, Knowing, Willing; and all the different Actings of our own Minds, which we being conscious of, and observing in our selves, do from these receive into our Understandings, as distinct Ideas, as we do from Bodies affecting our Senses*, l. 2. c. 1. §. 4. p. 42. PERCEPTION

is when the Mind receives an Impression, as when Fire burns, and the Motion is continued to the Brain, l. 2. c. 9. §. 2, 3. p. 66. This is the Inlet of all the Materials of Knowledge, id. §. 15. p. 69. and furnishes the Mind with a distinct Idea, which we call Sensation, which is, as it were, the actual Entrance of any Idea into the Understanding, l. 2. c. 19. §. 1. p. 119. THINKING is a Consciousness that one thinks, and CONSCIOUSNESS is a Perception of what passes in a Man's own Mind, l. 2. c. 1. §. 19. p. 48. DOUBTING is when the Mind, for want of Evidence, is at liberty to believe or disbelieve, vid. l. 4. c. 16. §. 9. p. 400. BELIEVING is the admitting or receiving any Proposition for true, upon Arguments or Proofs that are found to persuade us to receive it as true, without certain Knowledge that it is so, l. 4. c. 16. §. 3. p. 396. REASONING is ordering intermediate Ideas so, as to discover the certain Agreement or Disagreement of any two Ideas or Terms in a Proposition, l. 4. c. 17. §. 2. p. 404. And REASON is the Discovery of that Certainty or Probability, which the Mind arrives at by Deductions made from such Ideas, id. c. 18. §. 2. p. 417. KNOWING is the Perception of the Connexion and Agreement, or Disagreement and Repugnancy of any of our Ideas. Where this Perception is, there is Knowledge; where it is not, we always come short of Knowledge, l. 4. c. 1. §. 1. p. 313. WILLING is exercising a Power in the Mind to direct the operative Faculties of a Man to Motion or Rest, l. 2. c. 21. §. 29. p. 133. The Freedom of Will is the Power a Man has to do or forbear an Action, id. §. 15. p. 128. UNDERSTANDING is the Power of Thinking, l. 2. c. 6. §. 2. p. 56. and wholly passive in the Reception of simple Ideas, id. c. 1. §. 25. p. 49.

Under the different Actings of the Mind, mentioned as before, are, RETENTION, the keep-

ing or preserving Ideas already received, by which means the MEMORY can recal them when they have disappeared, or have been as it were out of Sight, l. 2. c. 10. §. 1, 2. p. 70. DISCERNING or distinguishing the several Ideas from each other, l. 2. c. 11. §. 1. p. 74. COMPARING them with one another in respect to Extent, Degrees, Time, Place, or any other Circumstances, id. §. 4. p. 75. COMPOUNDING, whereby the Mind puts together several simple Ideas, and combines them into complex ones, id. §. 6. p. 75. ABSTRACTING or making Ideas taken from particular Beings, to become general Representations of all of the same Kind, id. §. 9. p. 76. These are the first Faculties and Operations of the Mind, which it makes use of in understanding, id. §. 14. p. 77.

MIXED MODES are a Combination of Ideas, not as the characteristical Marks of any Beings that have a steady Existence, but are scattered independent Ideas, put together by the Mind, which receives all its simple Ideas from the Existence and Operations of Things, such as Sensation or Reflexion offers them, without being able to make any one Idea: But being once furnished with these, can put them together in several Compositions, and so make a variety of Complex Ideas, without examining whether they exist so in Nature, l. 2. c. 22. §. 1, 2. p. 154. COMPLEX IDEAS are made up of several simple ones put together, l. 2. c. 12. §. 1. p. 79. Many Complex Ideas arise from the Explication of their Names, which consist of a comparing of simple Ideas combin'd together, as in Sacrilege, Murder, Printing, and the like, id. §. 3. Complex Ideas of Substances are a Collection of simple Ideas considered as united in one Thing; as the Complex Idea of a Swan, is white Colour, long Neck, red Beak, black Legs, Power of Swimming, and other Properties united in the common Subject, id. c. 23. §. 14. p. 164. But all our Complex Ideas,  
however

however compounded or decompounded, may be resolved at last into simple Ideas, which are all the Materials of Knowledge or Thought, we have or can have, id. c. 22. § 9. p. 156.

Let us in the *Second Place* see, whether these Definitions of the first Faculties and Operations of the Intellect, suppose or include any Power of raising in the Mind new Ideas, that is, of unknown Objects which have a real Existence in Nature.

*First*, We may observe, that REFLEXION is the Notice which the Mind takes of its own Operations, and the Manner of them; if therefore we shall hereafter find, that the Mind knows not the Manner of its Operations, half its Business is at an End; and the Notice of an Operation will not produce the Idea of an Operation, where the Manner is unknown, nor of any thing else. *Secondly*, The Mind cannot make any Discoveries into the Nature and hidden Causes of these Ideas. And the most abstracted Reasonings will never be able to prove, that the fleeting Shadows of Ideas, whose Nature and Causes are to us not discoverable, should discover to us the hidden Causes and Nature of extrinsick real Beings.

But to consider the Ideas of Reflexion separately. PERCEPTION is not an Idea, but the Entrance of one; or a Perception that we perceive, which teaches nothing. THINKING is a Consciousness that one thinks, and CONSCIOUSNESS is a Perception of what passes in a Man's own Mind, i. e. a Man perceives he has a natural Power to think, which is no Idea of Reflexion, the Operation being altogether involuntary: A Man can no more help thinking whilst awake, than he can Breathing. DOUBTING can furnish no Idea, being only conversant about those already lodged in the Mind, between which it discerns not the Agreement or Disagreement. BELIEVING is  
not

not raising but assenting to Propositions, from a Persuasion of their Truth. REASONING is not the discovering of new Terms, but the Connexion or Repugnancy of those which are offered in any Proposition; as KNOWLEDGE is perceiving the indubitable Agreement or Disagreement between them. WILLING can recal Ideas which the Mind had before, not raise or create what it never had; so unable is it to produce new Objects, that if the MEMORY chance to forget old ones, it can never retrieve them but by fresh Impressions from the Senses. UNDERSTANDING is wholly passive, the Receiver, not the Former of simple Ideas. As for the other Workings of the Mind, RETENTION, DISCERNING, COMPARING, COMPOUNDING, ABSTRACTING, their Exercise is confin'd to Ideas ready at hand in the Mind, not in exciting new ones, as is evident from the Definitions.

The several Modes of thinking are conversant about Ideas already received, *l. 2. c. 19.* REMEMBRANCE is the Occurrence of an Idea, without the Operation of the Object. RECOLLECTION, to bring forth with Pain and endeavour the Idea sought for. CONTEMPLATION, to consider it attentively. ATTENTION, the taking notice of Ideas, and Registring them in the Memory. INTENTION, the fixing a View of one Idea, considering it on all sides, marking its Relations and Circumstances, without regard to any other. So the SIMPLE MODES we thence collect, as SPACE, *Id. c. 19.* DURATION, EXTENSION, NUMBERS, POWER, IDENTITY, DIVERSITY, and the like; they are only the Combination or Modification of the same simple Idea, or of simple Ideas of several kinds put together, *vid. l. 2. c. 12. §. 5. p. 80. and c. 13. §. 1.* by Observations collected from the Qualities and Affections of Bodies. But simple Ideas of Body and Matter, however combin'd

combin'd or modified, can never produce the remote Originals of spiritual immaterial Beings. Other simple Modes, of Motion, as SLIDING, WALKING, DANCING, RUNNING, &c. present only different Attitudes of the same Persons, not another. The Modes of TASTE, COLOURS, SOUND, and such like, are mere Sensations. And they who speak of Ideas of PASSIONS, LOVE, JOY, HATRED, &c. speak very improperly, till they explain how Matter acts upon Spirit, or how such Commotions are raised in the Mind by Agitations of the Blood and animal Spirits; which are to us inconceivable, what we have no Knowledge or Idea of.

COMPLEX IDEAS are a Company of simple ones combined, *vid. l. 2. c. 22. §. 3.* without the Addition of any new Originals: As is evident from those Acts of the Mind wherein it exercises a Power over its simple Ideas, which are, *1<sup>st</sup>*, Combining several together into a Complex one. *2<sup>dly</sup>*, Bringing two Ideas together, Simple or Complex, to take a view of them at once, without uniting them, by which it gets all the Ideas of Relations. *3<sup>dly</sup>*, Separating them from all other Ideas which accompany them in their real Existence, which is called Abstraction. *Vid. l. 2. c. 12. §. 1. p. 79.*

Mr. Locke again tells us, *l. 2. c. 21. §. 73. p. 153.* that all the Ideas of Reflexion are derived from, made up of, and reduced to these following, EXTENSION, SOLIDITY, MOBILITY, or the Power of being moved with Ideas we receive by our Senses from the Body. PERCEPTIVITY, or the Power of Thinking. MOTIVITY, or the Power of moving, which by Reflexion we receive from our Minds: And if we add to these, EXISTENCE, DURATION, and NUMBER, which belong both to one and the other, we have all the original Ideas on which the rest depend. So that

out of eight primary Ideas, only two are produced by the Reflexion of our Minds ; Thinking, whereof we have no Idea, neither of what it is, or wherein it consists, (as we shall presently see) and Moving, whereof likewise we are equally in the dark : We are conscious that Nature has such a Power, but discern not the most distant glimpse of the Action, Manner, or Production of it ; for how Spirit can operate upon Matter, or *Thought excite Motion, is not within our Comprehension*, l. 2. c. 23. §. 28. p. 168. And no one will affirm we can have Ideas of what is Incomprehensible to us, whatever Light we view it in : As where there is no Idea, there is nothing for the Mind to employ it self about, or reflect on. We know things by Experience, and there our Knowledge ends, having no Discernment of their Cause or Nature : *While we write, the Will, a Thought of the Mind, causes Motion in one Hand, and Rest in the other : This is fact, but no one can explain it, nor render it intelligible ; so of all the voluntary Motions produced in us only by the free Action or Thought of our Minds, the Determination of them is altogether unintelligible to us. Experience proves it, but Reason cannot account for, or comprehend it. And if we do not understand the Operation of our own finite Mind, that thinking Thing within us, it should not seem strange that we cannot comprehend the Operations of that Eternal Infinite Mind, who made and governs all things, and whom the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain*, l. 4. c. 10. §. 19. p. 379. How any Thought should produce Motion in the Body, is as remote from the Nature of our Ideas, as how any Body should produce Thought in the Mind. That it is so, if Experience did not convince us, the Consideration of the Things themselves would never be able, in the least, to discover to us. These and the like, tho' they have constant and regular Connexion in the ordinary course of Things ; yet the Connexion

not



*not being discoverable in the Ideas themselves, which appearing to have no necessary dependence one upon another, we can attribute their Connexion to nothing else, but the arbitrary Determination of that all-wise Agent, who has made them to be, and to operate as they do, in a way wholly above our weak Understanding to conceive, l. 4. c. 3. §. 28. p. 334. If the Mind then can have no Idea of what the Understanding is not able to conceive, no more than it can of the arbitrary Determination of God; if Ideas between which there is no discernible Connexion, nor necessary Dependence one upon another, cannot produce Truth, Certainty or Knowledge in us; we have no Ideas of Reflexion, not even of Thinking or Willing, or to no manner of Purpose. We know it is in fact so, and that is all; as where the fact is unintelligible, not to be explained by us, nothing is to be inferred. For it is only by perceiving the Connexion and Dependence of Ideas, that we arrive at Knowledge, l. 4. c. 17. §. 2. p. 404. where these are not discernible, there can be no Demonstration or regular Conclusion. As wherever we have no Ideas, our Reasoning fails, and we are at an end of our reckoning; the Obscurity, Confusion, or Imperfection of Ideas invoking us in Difficulties and Contradictions, Id. §. 9. p. 413. Reason being only the discovery of the Certainty or Probability which the Mind arrives at, by Deductions made from such Ideas, which it has got by the use of its natural Faculties by Sensation or Reflexion, Id. c. 18. §. 2. p. 417. But there can be no Deduction, no Conclusion inferred or drawn in, where the Mind does not perceive the indubitable Connexion of all the Ideas one with another, Id. c. 17. §. 2. p. 404.*

Ideas of Reflexion therefore are so far from raising new Objects in the Mind, that they are only the Perceptions of natural Powers, unintelligible to it: Or Notices of what the Senses convey

thither concerning the Appearances, Qualities, Accidents, Relations, and other Circumstances of Bodies; which are Ideas of Sensation, much more perfect than any internal Operations, by modifying of them, can produce: Nor will they infer any remote Truths, because their Nature, Causes, and Dependence are hidden from us. We stop at the Superficies of Things, and can go no farther, because of the Obscurity, Imperfection, and Want of Agreement in Ideas. And whatever Combinations the Mind can make from the visible Appearances and Constitution of Things; its Reflexions, when applied to Invisibilities (of which in a State of Nature it is not supposed to have any Notice) would be as far from Truth or Knowledge, as the blind Man's finding out the Colour of Scarlet to be like the Sound of a Trumpet: There is no Proportion, Analogy, or other Ingredient of Knowledge to infer the one from the other.

The few Discoveries made in the Nature of Things, are from poring and dwelling on sensible Experiments; which shews the long Acquaintance the Mind wants to gain a competent knowledge of what is most familiar to us; and till we understand what is nearest to us, it is irrational as well as impossible from them to discover the Nature of other Beings infinitely removed in Dignity and Distance from us. For simple Ideas being confined to the Observation of our Senses, and the Operation of our Minds, we may be immediately convinced *that all such Ideas are very disproportionate to things themselves, when a positive, clear, distinct one of Substance it self, which is the Foundation of all the rest, is concealed from us*, l. 4. c. 3. §. 23 p. 331. *Our Senses fail us in the discovery of Bulk, Texture and Figure of the minute Parts of Bodies, on which their real Constitutions and Differences depend*, l. 2. c. 23. §. 8. p. 161. *We are ignorant of the several Powers,*  
*Faculties,*

*Efficacies, and Ways of Operation, whereby the Effects we daily see are produced, which are hid from us in some things, by being too remote; in others, by being too minute, l. 4. c. 3. §. 24. p. 133. We want perfect and adequate Ideas of those very Bodies, which are nearest to us, and most under our command, being ignorant of their Essence, Constitutions, Powers, and Operations, l. 4. c. 3. §. 26. p. 333. We know not what real Constitution of Substance it is, whereon our simple Ideas depend, and which really is the Cause of the strict Union of some of them, one with another, and the Exclusion of others; there are very few of them we can be sure are, or are not inconsistent in Nature, any further than Experience and sensible Observation reaches; yet all our complex Ideas of them must be such, and such only, as are made up of such simple ones, Id. c. 4. §. 12. p. 340. Or how the primary Qualities of any Body produce certain Sensations or Ideas in us; or what are the Effects of Matter, under its diverse Modifications of Bulk, Figure, Cohesion of Parts, Motion and Rest, is utterly impossible to be known by us without Revelation, Id. c. 5. §. 14. p. 353. So little do we know of Bodies or their Properties, that Natural Philosophy is not capable of being made a Science; our Faculties are not fitted to penetrate into the internal Fabrick and real Essences of Bodies; but yet plainly discover to us the Being of a God, Id. c. 12. §. 11. p. 389. Let us observe the Manner and Force of Mr. Locke's Conclusion: It is utterly impossible for us to know any of the Effects of Matter without Revelation, our Faculties are not fitted to penetrate into Bodies: But they can plainly discover the Cause of all Effects, a Cause hidden from the Eye of Sense and Comprehension of the Mind, tho' they cannot possibly find out the Cause proximate to the most inconsiderable Effect produced in Nature. In the Knowledge of Bodies, we must be content to glean what we can from particular*

*Experiments*, Id. §. 12. *But of God, and Duty, and our great Concernment, we have enough to lead us to a full and clear Discovery*, Id. §. 11. These are some of the Extremes in Mr. *Locke's* Philosophy, which no Ideas of Reflexion can reconcile or bring together; yet easy as the Discovery of the Divine Nature is, so difficult was the finding out of Iron, that, as it follows in the same Section, he who first made known the Use of that contemptible Mineral, may be truly stiled the Father of Arts, and Author of Plenty.

To add a little more on this Subject. *We have only some superficial Ideas of Things discovered to us by the Senses from without, or the Mind reflecting on what it experiments on itself within; but have no Knowledge beyond that, much less of the internal Constitution, and true Nature of Things, being destitute of Faculties to attain it.—And when we would proceed further, we fall presently into Darkness and Obscurity, Perplexedness and Difficulties, and can discover nothing farther than our own Blindness and Ignorance*, l. 2. c. 23. §. 32. p. 170. Yes, God is farther, much farther, yet blind ignorant Mortals can, it seems, from *superficial Ideas* know him, but nothing else! *The great Cause of our Ignorance is a Want of a discoverable Connexion between those Ideas which we have; for wherever we want that, we are utterly incapable of universal and certain Knowledge. The mechanical Affections of Bodies which produce in us several Sensations, have no Affinity with the Ideas they produce in us; we can have no distinct Knowledge of such Operations beyond our Experience, and can reason no otherwise about them, than as Effects produced by the Appointment of an infinitely wise Agent, which perfectly surpass our Comprehensions*, l. 4. c. 3. §. 28. p. 334. Want of Connexion between Ideas, and Ideas without Affinity with the Affections that produce them, render us incapable  
of

of knowing the Works; but such unconnected Links, such a broken Chain can lead us to the Workman, who so infinitely farther surpasses our Comprehensions. This is to make Camels pass thro' the Eye of a Needle, which will scarce contain a single Thread. *Yet as our Knowledge cannot exceed our Ideas; as far as they are either imperfect, confused, or obscure, we cannot expect to have certain, perfect or clear Knowledge,* Id. c. 12. §. 14. p. 391. *Our Knowledge being real only so far, as there is a Conformity between our Ideas, and the Reality of Things,* Id. c. 4. §. 3. p. 337.

From which Principles, and Method of coming at Knowledge; (that it cannot exceed our Ideas, that in Proportion as these are imperfect, confused, or obscure, such will be our Knowledge, that all our Ideas are merely superficial and unconnected, as must be the Knowledge grounded on them :) No impartial Enquirer after Truth will conclude, that a Mind discerning nothing beyond the Superficies of Things but its own Blindness and Ignorance, can discover the Plenitude of Being with such Ease, Plainness, and Certainty as Mr. *Locke* insinuates.

We cannot but observe that simple Ideas are the only Ground-work of all our Thoughts, and since Mr. *Locke* so constantly appeals to Experience, in order to fix the Boundaries of our Understanding (because every Man must certainly perceive what passes in his own Mind, and how he came at Knowledge, better than any other can inform him) it were to be wished that every sincere Lover of Truth would make the Experiment, and try whether he can discover any real existent Being, of which he has had no Notices by Sensation or Instruction, thereby to determine his Judgment on the Point before us. *For he that would not deceive himself, ought to build his Hypothesis on Matter of Fact, and make it out by sensible Experience, and not presume*

*on Matter of Fact, because of his Hypothesis, that is, because he supposes it to be so, l. 2. c. 1. §. 11. p. 44.*

If we only strip this Fantom of its Metaphysical Disguise, and place it in a familiar Light, it may perhaps help to convince us of this Truth, that the Knowledge of unknown Beings cannot enter the Imagination, by any other Inlets, than those of Sensation and Instruction. *The Mind knows not Things immediately, but only by the Intervention of the Ideas it has of them, l. 4. c. 4. §. 3. p. 337.* Therefore the whole Extent of our Knowledge reaches not beyond our own Ideas, limited to our Ways of Perception, l. 3. c. 11. §. 23. p. 308. For as Things themselves cannot enter the Cabinet of the Mind, the Representations or Ideas of them stand in their stead, which Mr. Locke rightly calls Prints, Inscriptions, Pictures, Imagery, Images, Characters, l. 1. c. 10. §. 5. p. 71.

Let us then suppose a Number of Pictures, Images, or Medals of different Colours, Shapes, Sizes, Inscriptions and Characters shewn to one, whose Mind is unfurnished, or hitherto unacquainted with such Exemplars. The Instant one is produced, he observes the Resemblance or Impression of it enter his Mind, which is PERCEPTION; the preserving it there is RETENTION, he RECOLLECTS it, CONTEMPLATES it, ATTENTIVELY views and fixes the Idea, by marking its Relations and Circumstances. If a Number (for Instance an Hundred) of them are placed before him, he will again PERCEIVE their several Ideas, and by ATTENTION fix the most remarkable ones in his MEMORY; he will then DISCERN them, so as to DISTINGUISH them from each other; COMPARE them with respect to Size, Beauty, Ornament, or other Circumstances; COMBINE many of them together into a COMPLEX Figure, as (if Images) of an Army;  
and

and can afterwards so **ABSTRACT**, as to make one stand for a general Representation of all of the same kind.

Here he will exercise all the original Ideas of **REFLEXION**, **EXTENSION**, in their Magnitude, **SOLIDITY** in the Marble or Metal, **MOBILITY** or the Power of being moved, **EXISTENCE** as they stand before him, **DURATION** according to the Firmness of their Materials, **NUMBER** as he finds and counts them. This will make him conscious of **PERCEPTIVITY** or Power to think about them, and **MOTIVITY** or the Power of Moving, as Thought or Will shall direct his Hand. The Mind may here exert its Faculties over the **SIMPLE IDEAS**, *1<sup>st</sup>*, by combining several together; *2<sup>dly</sup>*, by bringing two simple ones, or two complex little Companies together, to view them at once, and get the several Ideas of Relations; and *3<sup>dly</sup>* to separate them again from all other Ideas. Here is an ample Field for his **REASONING** to discover their Agreement or Disagreement, and knowing wherein it consists; for **BELIEVING** on sufficient Proofs, that this is of Marble, that of Brass; and **DOUBTING** what a third Composition may be; or suspending his Assent, which excels in Delicacy of Art or Feature.

Let him put them in a thousand Groups or Attitudes, compound and decompound them never so often, view and review their Bulk, Figure, Texture, Colours and other Properties, make them perform all the Evolutions of the Military Art, and carry his Imagination (if he has heard of such Things) to Campaigns, Battles, and Triumphs, wherein his Ideas of Reflexion may be almost infinite. Yet when he has run through this pleasing Reverie, let him sit down, separate his Complex Ideas, reduce them to the simple original ones, and count the  
Exemplars

Exemplars or Archetypes of his Ideas; he will find there is not one more, than was at first brought in at the Door, or placed in his View; not the Increase of a single Object, no Alteration in Bulk, Weight, Beauty, or other Circumstance.

The Operation of the human Mind is no more than this, it cannot take in the Image of one real existing Object, but through the Door of the Senses, nor with all its secret Mechanism or Powers give Picture or Existence to what it has not received from without. *For it is not in the power of the most exalted Sagacity, or Quickness of Thought, to invent or frame one new Simple Idea*, l. 2. c. 2. §. 2. p. 50. and combine together never so many Ideas of material visible Things, they will never produce an Idea, either Simple or Complex, of what is Invisible or Immaterial. *We know nothing beyond our Ideas, and of an Immaterial Substance we have naturally no Ideas*, l. 4. c. 3. §. 17. p. 328. *The Existence of Spirits is not knowable but by Revelation*, id. c. 12. §. 12. p. 384.

It is evident that Ideas of Reflexion are here considered in no other Light, than as unproductive of new Objects to the Contemplation of the Intellect; and that we can have no Ideas but from Sensation. Mr. Locke acknowledges, that, by the Mind's Reflexion on what passes within it, we can have Ideas but of two sorts of Action, Motion and Thinking, l. 2. c. 21. §. 72. p. 172. Yet it appears that we know not what the one or the other is, wherein they consist, nor how they are produced; therefore can have no proper Ideas of them, or their Operations. To know that something passes within us, we know not what, affords not an Idea, though it may a Consciousness, *which is inseparable from Thinking, and essential to it, it being impossible for one to perceive, without perceiving he does perceive*, l. 2. c. 3, 17. §. 9. p. 183. And a  
Per-



a Perception that we perceive we know not what, nor how, nor why, will make no Advancements towards real Knowledge. *Thinking is the Employment of the Mind about the Ideas which are in it*, l. 2. c. 1. §. 1. p. 41. but is no Idea of itself; *But the Things which the Mind contemplates, not being present to the Understanding, it is necessary that Signs or Representations of the Things it considers should be present to it, which Signs are Ideas. As the Signs of Ideas are articulate Sounds or Words, which are necessary to record them for our own Use, and to communicate our Thoughts one to another*, l. 4. c. 21. §. 4. p. 437.

If an Apology were wanting for what is here offered, it is this; That whoever has a serious Love for Truth, and prepares his Mind to search impartially after it, will give no Degrees of Assent to any thing proposed, beyond the Degrees of Evidence which accompany it; nor is it any way injurious to Mr. Locke, that others cannot implicitly submit to an Hypothesis, *wholly new and unborrowed*, as he confesses his to be, l. 4. c. 17. §. 7. p. 412. It is a Duty we owe to God and Truth, *to cast about for new Discoveries, and to seek in our own Thoughts for those right Helps of Art, which will scarce be found, I fear, by those who servilely confine themselves to the Rules and Dictates of others*, Id. In all these Cases the Appeal must be to *unprejudiced Experience and Observation*, l. 1. c. 4. §. 25. p. 39. as by them we can only judge of the Methods whereby we arrive at Knowledge: *For it is something beyond Philosophy, and it cannot be less than Revelation that discovers to another Thoughts in my Mind, when I can find none there myself*, l. 2. c. 1. §. 19. p. 48. Or that we come at the Knowledge of spiritual unknown Beings, when we can trace

no such procedure, neither believe nor think it possible.

I shall therefore venture to examine this Hypothesis a little deeper.—We are assured *that Simple Ideas, which the Mind can by no means make to it self, must necessarily be the Product of Things operating on the Mind in a natural Way, and are not the Fictions of our Fancy, but the regular Productions of Things without us*, l. 4. c. 4. §. 4. p. 337. *And that all our Complex Ideas whatsoever, may at last be resolved into Simple Ideas, which are all the Materials of Knowledge or Thought we have or can have*, l. 2. c. 22. §. 9. p. 156. And as without Ideas of Sensation, it would be impossible to have any of Reflexion (for without Sense the Mind would be always a mere Blank) so they may be ultimately resolved into it. And though the Imagination take never so lofty Flights by combining Ideas and laying Mountain upon Mountain to invade Heaven, it will never reach it, but when it separates its Ideas, will find no Addition or Increase to the ancient Store of Originals by any such Operations. It is very true, that the Mind can put together a Combination of scattered independent Ideas, and thereby perceive things which do not, nor ever did exist in Nature, as in the given Instances of a Golden Mountain, or dreadful Animal: But though they do not exist in the compounded Manner wherein they are pictured to the Imagination; yet all the Parts whereof they consist, as a Mountain, and Gold, had a separate Existence, and were known to the Mind, before it thus arbitrarily joined them together, which is no more than *Horace's* Painter did,

*Humano capiti cervicem pictor equinam  
Jungere si velit, & varias inducere plumas :*

He

He ranged and disposed things in a different Manner, but produced nothing of a new Store, nor added any thing to an ancient one.

But such a Power in the Mind to raise Ideas of new and unknown Objects, is in my Apprehension both useless and impossible.

FIRST, They are useless, or of no real Service to the Mind, whatever Attention it pays them. If they give us Complex Views of Things really existing, as of a Flock of Sheep, or an Army of Men, no deeper Insight into Nature will be attained, than by abstractedly considering an Individual of each Species; as in Numbers, an Hundred consists in repeating an Unit an hundred times, so it is in all other things of the like Denomination, which equally and exactly partake of the same specifick Essence. If they are an Assemblage of scattered Ideas, to represent what has no real Existence, it may be an agreeable Vision to the Fancy, but cannot afford any real Knowledge, which is a Conformity between our Ideas and the Reality of Things; where there is no existing Pattern or Archetype to refer them to, they are merely Fantastical, *or such a Collection of Ideas as no Substance ever shewed us united together*, l. 2. c. 30. §. 1. p. 207. He who apprehends something useful to be thence extracted, must separate and decompound them, before he can distinguish what is Truth or Falshood; which is treading in a Circle without advancing a Step in Knowledge.

If we could raise Ideas entirely New, they must be Objects unknown to us (for of all known ones we already have Ideas) in which the Mind could receive no Satisfaction, being unable to declare whether they represent the Things it intends they should stand for, or discern whether they more belong to the Name given, than to any other of a

quite different Signification. Words are but empty Sounds any farther than they are Signs of our Ideas; and Ideas are but empty Dreams, when they have no steady Correspondence with the Constitutions of real Beings. Knowledge is a Perception of the Agreement or Disagreement of our Thoughts and Ideas with the Things for which they are substituted. Ideas or Names inconsistent with, or repugnant to the Existence of Things, are no more than Chimeras in the Mind that uses them, and want all the Materials of true or real Knowledge. The very Supposition of Objects unknown, must always exclude a Certainty of any exact Conformity between our Ideas and the Truth or Thing sought for.

Tell a Thousand knowing Persons, that you have seen a MANUCODIATA, they may raise a confused Idea of it, but could not judge it had any Agreement with Nature, as being ignorant what it is, whether Bird, or Beast, or Man; the only Increase of Knowledge is a Name or Sound without a Meaning. If you go on and describe it as *Cardan*, *Hernandes*, *Scaliger*, and others have done, that it is a Bird which lives in the Air, without ever coming near the Earth till it falls down dead upon it, that its Food is the Dew of Heaven, and the Incubiture of the Female on the Back of the Male, their Ideas will be enlarged according to the Degrees of Information, but no Fecundity of the Mind can make them perceive one single Property, farther than they are instructed. So it is of every Object that was never present to us, we cannot so much as discover their Existence, nor by any Operation of Thought or Ideas of Reflexion penetrate into their Nature, Essence or Properties, till we are instructed in them, whether they are Material ones, or Immaterial, as Spirit, Angel, or God.

Ideas

Ideas are by no Means of our own Election or Will, we cannot define Colours without Sight, nor see a Man by Hearsay ; nor can a Painter, though never so excellent in his Art, draw the Picture of an unknown Person, so as to be sure he had hit it right, or that it bore the least Likeness or Resemblance. It may therefore as well stand for any other, from whom it ought to be different ; and where the Difference of Things is not distinguished, the Mind perceives nothing but Confusion and Uncertainty. So a Man cannot form the Idea of an Object, unless he knew it before, and had the Pattern in his Mind, *i. e.* unless he had already the Idea of it, which has no Dependence on his Will. If he has the Idea of it already, he knows the Object, and cannot form a new one of it ; as where there is one already, a second would be vain.

In all Cases we either do or do not know the Object ; if the former, the Idea is already present ; if the latter, any Idea we should raise would be useless, having no Rule to judge whether it be an adequate Representation of the Thing intended, nor to distinguish between Truth and Falshood : As wherever the Correspondence between Object and Idea is adequate or confused, no Knowledge or Certainty can be inferred. When an Idea does not answer the particular Signification of a Word, nor the real Essence of the Thing signified, it is imperfect, affords nothing the Mind can rest upon, or be satisfied with, in its Search after Truth, *The perceiving their exact Difference, is so absolutely necessary, that without it, there could be no Knowledge, no Reasoning, no Imagination, no distinct Thought at all, l. 4. c. 1. §. 4.* Truth is the Conformity of Signs or Words, whereby Things are expressed, to the Things themselves : Falshood is, when they do  
not

not express Things as they are, or they consist in joining or separating of Signs, i. e. Ideas or Words, as the Things signified by them do agree or disagree one with another, l. 4. c. 5. §. 2.

But in the Enquiry before us, it would be sufficient to say, that upon the Principles of Natural Religion, no Ideas are useful but as they are conformable to the Reality and Nature of Things. If they represent what has no Existence, or otherwise than they do exist, no Object or Truth can be concluded or drawn in from the *eternal Fitness, Congruity, or Relations of Things*; as these must have their Foundation in Nature, not in the Dreams of a Fever, or the Sallies of an heated Imagination.

SECONDLY, I think a Power in the Mind to raise Ideas of unknown Objects, to be impossible.

Not to appeal again to Observation and Experience, which will always convince a Man, who will make the Trial, that the Mind cannot form any Ideas which do not originally arise from, and must ultimately be resolved into Sensation: It is evident that Ideas are Signs or Exhibitions of something; for if there be no Signs or Resemblances of any thing in the Intellect, the Mind (as Mr. *Woolaston* words it) is *non intelligent*, or intelligent of nothing: It must therefore get this something, before it can have an Idea of it; and to produce something without an antecedent Idea of it, is, in the most relaxed Signification, to create. *Augustus* confessed he could not make a new *Latin Word*: Every existing Object having a Name to express it, without creating something he could not have imposed a Name; without a new Object and Idea there can be no Use of a new Word. *For Language is proportioned to the Notions of Men, and 'tis no wonder Men should have framed no Names for those things*

*things they found no Occasion to discourse of, l. 2.*  
c. 28. §. 2. p. 193.

Without going so far as some have done (who maintain that Ideas are real things, as they have real Properties, vary one from another, represent opposite Things, and are of a spiritual Nature, very different from the Bodies represented by them) it may be affirmed, that they who say the Mind has a Power of producing the Ideas of Things for the Subject of its Contemplations, must attribute to it a Power of creating, or producing something out of nothing. For the Production of Ideas in the Manner explained by them, who maintain such a Power in the Mind, is (as Mr. *Malbranch* argues) a proper and true Creation. And Men not having the Power of creating, have not consequently the Power of producing Ideas in such a manner as is pretended: For they who would soften the Harshness or Presumption of their Opinion, in saying, that the Production of Ideas supposes something antecedent, whereas Creation supposes nothing, bring no Reasons to solve the apparent Difficulties.

It is an Observation carefully to be remarked; that there is no greater Difficulty in producing Something out of Nothing, than out of some antecedent supposed Thing whereof it could not possibly be made, or what in the Nature of Things could contribute nothing to its Production. For Instance, there is no greater Difficulty in the absolute Creation of an Angel, than in producing an Angel out of a Stone; because a Stone being of a material, dead, senseless, opposite Kind, could be no way serviceable to the Production of a living, spiritual, immaterial Being; nay perhaps it may include a greater Difficulty, as requiring a double Act of Omnipotence, first to annihilate the Stone,  
and

and then create the Angel. The same will hold true of all the Complex Ideas of Reflexion: The Mind has originally no Ideas but of Sensation; if it can from them produce the Idea of an Angel, it does the same or as difficult Work, as if it created one; since between material Images, or their known Properties, and Spiritual Beings, there is no Semblance or Proportion; no Seeds in Essence or Nature to produce a Being of so opposite a kind, and different Constitution; nor any Analogy, whereby the Mind could perceive a Relation, or the bare Possibility for one to arise from the other.

In this Sense only are Mr. Locke's Words true, *l. 2. c. 2. §. 2. p. 50. That it is not in the Power of the most exalted Wit, or enlarged Understanding, by any quickness or variety of Thought, to invent or frame one new simple Idea in the Mind, not taken in by the ways beforementioned, [Sensation and Instruction.] The Dominion of Man in this little World of his own Understanding, being much what the same as it is in the great World of visible Things; wherein his Power, however managed by Art or Skill, reaches no farther, than to compound and divide Materials, that are made to his Hands; but can do nothing towards making the least Particle of new Matter.*

If we consider Ideas as (what they properly are) Images or Pictures of Things, by contemplating of which the Mind is enabled to think, in the Absence of real Objects, they must be according to some real Exemplar or Archetype, or they are the Sign and consequently the Perception of Nothing: *Something* must be the Object of Thought, we cannot think on *Nothing*, as it has neither Existence, Substance, nor Properties to be considered. What is more than Nothing must have Essence and Existence, *i. e.* be produced into Being, which is the very Act of Creation; so that except the  
Mind



Mind can give Existence to positive Entities, which were not in being before, Ideas of Reflexion are barren unproductive Notions. If it can give Existence, it must create, *i. e.* be omnipotent, or God.

Lastly, They who affirm the Mind of Man, by its own Reflexions, can perceive all Things external to it, must allow these two Propositions ; 1<sup>st</sup>, That by an Act of the Will it can produce such Ideas of unknown Objects at Pleasure, of all Things, and at all Times, to have them present for its Use ; otherwise they would be of no Use or Purpose, if not ready at hand, when Need and Occasion call for them. If it has such Power, Existence must depend on the Will of Man as its Cause ; *For a Cause is that which makes any other Thing, either simple Idea, Substance or Mode begin to be : And the Effect is that, which had its beginning from some other Thing*, l. 2. c. 26. §. 2. p. 177. 2<sup>dly</sup>, If the Mind contain in it Ideas necessary to the Perception of all Things, it must also contain the Existence and Essence of all Things ; Ideas being useless or false, where the Agreement betwixt them and the real Constitution of Things is not exactly discern'd. And if the Mind contain these, it can know the limits of their Nature, define and comprehend them, *i. e.* has an unlimited Capacity, and on these Accounts has no Dependence on an All-comprehending Being.

Which is the sole Aim of vain ungrateful Reason in these Pretensions ; to be self-sufficient to its own Productions, Perfections, and Acts, without standing in need of superior Assistance, utterly independent of the Father of Lights, who alone teacheth Man Knowledge ; proposing spiritual and immortal Objects to its View, in such measure as its Faculties can bear, and (not being able to

comprehend the whole) in such Degrees, as are sufficient to its final End and Happiness.

I shall in the THIRD Place endeavour to shew from Mr. *Locke's* own Principles and Argumentation, that the Human Mind cannot, by any Ideas of Reflexion, or other internal Operations, come at the Knowledge of God, the great and Fundamental Article whereon all other spiritual Truths depend.

How we can ascend to the Knowledge of a Creator, is without Controversy one of the most important Subjects, the Mind of Man can exercise its strongest Faculties upon. The present Age roundly affirms, that the Connexion between the Works and the Workman are so plainly and clearly perceived by the natural Sagacity of Reason, that there is not a more obvious or demonstrable Truth. To prevent any dispute about the Extent of Reason, we ought to pitch on some sublimer Genius, as a common Measure to regulate our Judgments by; for if it be not allowed, that the Arguments of the most reasonable Men are the Proofs of Reason, we may argue on *ad infinitum*, without knowing whether a Proposition be capable of Proof or not; what is within or without the Sphere of our Knowledge and Comprehension.

The Names of *Aristotle* and *Newton* may be here omitted; one knew nothing, the other has recorded nothing on the Subject before us. And where shall we find a Third to succeed them but in Mr. *Locke*, the most accurate Searcher into the Extent and Powers of Reason, that the latter Ages can boast of, and who has long been appealed to as sole Umpire and Judge in Philosophical Controversies. Here I shall readily join Issue, and if the same Arguments (to use his Words) may be allowed as Demonstrations to me, which have been hitherto  
im-

implicitly granted to him, I make no doubt of demonstrating, *that the being of a Deity, the only fundamental Truth, on which all Religion and genuine Morality depend*, l. 4. c. 8. §. 7. p. 374. is not to be known by any Ideas of Reflexion, or other internal Operations the Mind may exercise in the Contemplation of those two noblest Topicks, the Soul of Man, or the Works of Creation.

Some Things preparatory thereto may be deservedly considered.

*First*, That wherever Mr. *Locke* introduces the Knowledge we come at of spiritual or invisible Beings, his Arguments are intended no farther than to shew the Probability of them, that there is as much Reason to believe as to disbelieve them; without laying down any direct Proofs, or intermediate Ideas, whereby Reason might infer the undoubted Certainty of them: Tho' where these are wanting, the Mind sees not the Connexion of Truths, can make no Deductions, nor arrive at the least degree of what is called Knowledge or Demonstration. It is very certain, no such intermediate Ideas can be found out; but then the Consequence will be, that no such immaterial Beings can be perceived, or inferred by our rational Faculties.

Of spiritual Objects in general, he says over and over, that we have no Idea of Substance, nor know any thing of it, but the outward Figure and Appearance, as an unknown *Substratum* to many sensible Qualities, Powers, or Relations it has to other Bodies: Whence he argues, *That the Idea of corporeal Substance in Matter being as remote from our Conceptions and Apprehensions, as that of spiritual Substance, or Spirit: It is as rational to affirm there is no Body, as to say, there is no Spirit, because we have no clear and distinct Idea of the Substance of*

*Spirit*, l. 2. c. 23. §. 5. p. 160. *i. e.* one unknown Thing may possibly exist as well as another; but here is no Step, or middle Term, whereby the Mind can proceed to Knowledge; which he would not have omitted, could Ideas of Reflexion have furnished him with any. But the Truth is, there is no Resemblance, Analogy or Agreement between Matter and Spirit. whereby the Terms could be connected, or the Illation made. A sure Indication that Mr. *Locke* did not find out, but was taught, what he says upon the Subject.

Again, *Having as clear and distinct Ideas in us of Thinking, as of Solidity, I know not why we may not as well allow a thinking Thing without Solidity, i. e. immaterial, to exist, as a solid Thing without thinking, i. e. Matter, to exist, especially since it is no harder to conceive how Thinking should exist without Matter, than how Matter should think,* Id. §. 32. p. 170. That is, we know nothing of either, one may possibly be as well as the other.

It were to be wished this great Master of Reason had placed his intermediate Ideas in such Method and Order, that every one might have perceived the Agreement of these distant Terms, and laid down that Chain of Knowledge, in which (as he says) if but one Link be loose, the Strength of the whole is lost, and nothing to be inferr'd. To have done this, to have convinced Mankind, that there was such a Scale of Divine Wisdom, by easy Steps and *juxta*-Position of Proofs, whereby the Human Mind could have ascended to such Knowledge, would have been a Task worthy of so great a Genius, and exhibited a Body of Philosophy more valuable than all the Books in the World, except the inspired ones. But where has he attempted it, or even made an Entrance upon it? The declining  
it

it proves it impracticable, to be more than his Scheme of Ideas of Reflexion would bear. He saw the Defect of his Hypothesis, but too late, in not admitting Language and Instruction among the great Inlets of Knowledge; he confesses the Arguments to be inferred from the use of Words were new to him, what he thought not of when he began to write, *l. 3. c. 5. §. 16. p. 256.* as to have new-modell'd so spacious a System, and made Language an Instrument of Knowledge, *l. 3. c. 9. §. 21. p. 288.* was too laborious a Task to enter on in his advanced Years, would have overthrown Ideas of Reflexion, and a Character he had been so long establishing in the learned World: A Trial which few Minds, however exalted, are so disinterested as to submit to.

*Secondly,* To this Defect I impute the Inferences he frequently makes, in a very unphilosophical Manner, without assigning the least Shadow of Proof or Reason, especially on the Subject of our attaining the Knowledge of God.

For Instance. *The Knowledge of our own Being we have by Intuition, the Existence of God Reason clearly makes known to us. l. 4. c. 11. §. 1. p. 380. The Knowledge of the Existence of any other thing we can have only by Sensation. Id. §. 13. Of Spirits only by Revelation, Id. §. 12.* But why, if God be a Spirit, should he be known by other Means than Spirits are knowable, by Revelation only?

Again, tho' we are not able to attain a clear, adequate, or even competent Knowledge of one single thing about us; *we know not the Essence of a Pebble or a Fly, or of our own selves, l. 2. c. 33. §. 25. p. 171.* Yet we are furnished with Faculties (dull and weak as they are) to discover enough in the Creatures, to lead us to the Knowledge of the Creator, and the Knowledge of our Duty: And we are fitted  
well

*well enough with Abilities to provide for the Conveniences of living: These are our business in this World*, Id. § 12. p. 162. How gently is this slid in, and how void of Proof? Dull weak Faculties—but *well enough* to discover a Creator and the Support of Life; as if any thing would serve for the Purpose, and it were as easy to discern invisible Omnipotence, as to quench our Thirst, or hide our Nakedness! Tho' were the Abilities of Reason to be measured by this Rule, we shall find, that Men after the Dispersion lived for many Ages like Beasts on Fruits and Berries, without Raiment, without Shelter, but what Dens and Caves afforded equally to both. The Person who first taught the sowing of Corn, was ever after worshipped as a God. Mr. Locke says, l. 4. c. 12. §. 11. p. 390. *Were the Use of Iron lost amongst us, we should in a few Ages be unavoidably reduced to the Wants and Ignorance of the ancient savage Americans, whose natural Endowments and Provisions come no way short of the most flourishing and polite Nations.* How miserable then is the condition of Reason, that the perfecting of it should in so high a Degree depend on a bit of Iron? From this Account we may venture to affirm, that the Wretch who found out this Metal, contributed more towards discovering the Deity, than Aristotle by his Logick, or Mr. Locke by his Ideas of Reflexion.

So again, tho' we cannot by our Faculties attain a perfect Knowledge of Things which surround us, not the Iron we handle, nor the Ground we tread on; yet *they will serve us well enough for those Ends abovementioned, viz. the Knowledge of the Creator, and our Duty*, l. 2. c. 23. §. 13. p. 164. Tho' we are blind and dwell on the Superficies of the most trifling Things, those Faculties which every Worm that crawls confounds, will serve us *well enough* to discover

discover an Essence which is hidden, a Glory which is inaccessible: Every thing in God is of his Essence; that it seems is easily found out and declared, tho' no Man can tell wherein the Essence of a Fly consists. Or if this be so obvious, how comes it to pass, *that some Men have no Ideas of God, some worse than none, most very different*, l. 4. c. 8. §. 7. p. 374. That they are various in different Men, and much more resemble the Opinion and Notion of the Teacher, *than the true God*, l. 1. c. 4. §. 13. p. 32.

Nor does Mr. *Locke* ever tell us, by what Method of Procedure Ideas of Reflexion are to connect our Minds with the Divine Nature; without which they are perfectly useless to all the Purposes of real Knowledge. *We know nothing beyond our simple Ideas: whenever we would proceed beyond them, and dive farther into the Nature of Things, we fall presently into Darknes and Obscurity, and can discover nothing but our own Blindness and Ignorance. But which ever of these complex Ideas be clearest, that of Body, or immaterial Spirit, this is evident, that the simple Ideas that make them up, are no other than what we have received from Sensation or Reflexion; and so is it of all our other Ideas of Substance, even of God himself*, l. 2. c. 23. §. 32. p. 170. How does this carry us thro' the dark Nature of Things, to apply the simple Ideas of Sensation to make up complex Ideas of Substances, invisible, unknown, what we are supposed never to have heard of? Finite is a simple Idea of Body, this we must stretch to Infinite, tho' nothing but Infinity can do it: So of other Properties, Existence, Wisdom, and Power, add Infinity to them (tho' you never heard of the Term, or a Being to whom it is applicable) and you have the Idea of an infinite Being. But how this Transition from Finite to Infinite is to be made, neither he nor any other  
Mortal

Mortal has declar'd : Here it is they fall presently into Darknes and Obscurity, and can discover nothing but their own Blindness and Ignorance.

His Arguments may be of use to Persons already instructed in divine Subjects, who by enlarging *the simple Ideas in their Mind, frame the best Idea they can of that all-bountless and infinite Being, which we call God*, Id. §. 34. But can be of no Service to those who have no Ideas of God, or worse than none, to those who believed the Universe or dead Men to be Gods, *i. e. to every Man upon the face of the Earth for a thousand Years together*. To shew the Impossibility of framing such an Idea of infinite Perfection, no Philosopher, the best or wisest that ever liv'd, can be named, whose Notion of God did not include an Idea of Imperfection. The mistake of modern Philosophy is to begin at the wrong end, and ascend upwards from finite to infinite: so did the Ancients, who called the World, and many things infinite, without knowing what Infinity was; whereas it is a Wisdom that descends, and comes down from above, it is only from an infinitely perfect Cause, that we frame the best Notion we can of Infinity.

Of Eternity, a Christian perhaps may by his Rule, *l. 2. c. 17. §. 3. p. 108.* find a help the better to form his Conceptions, but not to discover the Divine Nature. *For 'tis another Question quite different from our having an Idea of Eternity, to know whether there were any real Being, whose Duration has been eternal*, Id. §. 5. So that a Man may have an Idea of Eternity, yet none (according to Mr. Locke's Principles) of God; which plainly shews that there is no necessary Connexion or Agreement between the Terms, nor any real Knowledge to be inferred from them. Experience in these Cases is the surest Demonstration; there  
never



never was a single ancient Sage who held the Eternity of God, but at the same time maintained another coeternal Principle, *viz.* Matter, or Evil. Tho' if there be two Eternals, there may be two Thousand, or none: which shews that what Mr. *Locke* builds on *Ideas* of Reflexion, he did not get from Reason but another Channel, and that they are of no Service to the Cause for which they are produced.

Of Immensity, by the Addition of one Foot to another, and so on, we enlarge our Ideas to boundless Space, *l. 2. c. 13. §. 4. and c. 17. §. 3.* But suppose we have learned that so many Inches make a Foot, so many Feet a Yard, so many Yards a Mile, so many Miles a Degree, and so many Degrees reach round the Earth, or up to the Stars: There our Horizon is bounded, and Immensity as far as ever from our View; the Idea would be unapplicable by one in a State of Nature. And they who know God, perceive, that the first Foot may be as justly applied, as any Progression the Imagination can conceive, to him of whose Essence it is, not to be measured. All these Simple Ideas proceed from Finite, and no Combination of Numbers can express an Infinite.

The same will hold of Power: Add Finite or Infinite as long as we please, the Mind will never conceive Omnipotence. No *Plato* or wiser Heathen could, or did, believe it in the Power of God to create Matter: Consequently no Simple Ideas of Existence, Space, Duration, Knowledge, Power, or Pleasure could in the most advanced Mind discover an Eternal, Omniscient, Omnipotent, Infinitely Wise and Happy Being.

Nor does Mr. *Locke*, where he professedly treats of the Existence of God, as *l. 4. c. 10.* offer any Arguments, which had weight with the Heathen

Theologists; a sure Proof that no pretended Ideas of Reflexion can lead us to it: They enjoyed the Faculties of Nature in as perfect a Manner as Christians do, yet saw not the Evidence, Truth, or Consistency of them. For Instance, a Man knows by an intuitive Certainty, that Nothing cannot produce a real Being, nor Incogitative a Cogitative one, *id.* §. 10. An intuitive Knowledge is vastly clearer than a reflexive one, but both equally useless in the present Case; not a Philosopher since the World began, ever imagining that Matter was the Effect of a wise powerful Cause; and most concluded the incogitative Elements were the sole Principles of Gods as well as Men.

*Thirdly*, The Condition of Man's Nature and Faculties as represented by Mr. *Locke*, must disable him from coming at the Knowledge of God by any Operation of the Mind.

*God has no doubt made us as is best for us in our present Condition*, l. 2. c. 23. §. 13. p. 164. *and hath fitted our Senses, Faculties, and Organs to the Business we have to do here*, *id.* §. 12. Yet we know Things only by Experience, that is the Limit of our Understanding. *There is not a Substance that exists, but has something in it which baffles our Understanding*, l. 4 c. 3. §. 6. p. 324. Therefore one would imagine that God, who is a spiritual Substance, should baffle us also: But these Things want no Remarks. *We are ignorant of all the Powers, Efficacies, and Operations, whereby the Effects we daily see are produced*, *id.* §. 6. *We may conclude, that the Things which we constantly find to proceed regularly, do act by a Law set them, but yet by a Law that we know not*, *id.* §. 29. *When we come to examine the most contemptible Plant or Animal, we presently find that we know not their Make, can give no reason of the different Qualities*  
we

*we find in them. The internal Constitution whereon their Properties depend, is unknown to us. So that the Workmanship of the all-wise and powerful God, in the great Fabrick of the Universe, and every Part thereof, farther exceeds the Capacity and Comprehension of the most inquisitive and intelligent Man, than the best Contrivance of the most ingenious Man, doth the Conception of the most ignorant of Rational Creatures, l. 3. c. 6. §. 9. p. 260.*

If then the Causes of the most familiar Things are unknown, it must be impossible to ascend by any Gradation or Links of Causes and Effects, which have a necessary Dependence on each other, to the supreme first Cause of all Things: Because we discern not how any one is connected to another. *He that will only count twenty, or have any Idea of the Number, must know that nineteen went before with the distinct Name or Sign of every one of them, as they stand marked in their Order; and must retain in his Memory the Names or Marks of the several Combinations from an Unit to that Number; and that not confusedly and at random, but in exact Order. For wherever this fails, a Gap is made, the Chain breaks, and the Progress can go no farther, l. 2. c. 16. §. 7. p. 107. Yet he tells us, That there should be more Species of intelligent Creatures above us, than there are of Sensible and Material below us, is probable from hence, that in all the visible corporeal World, we see no Chasms or Gaps; all quite down from us, the Descent is by easy Steps, and a continued Series of Things, that in each Remove differ very little the one from the other. There are some Brutes which seem to have as much Knowledge and Reason as some that are called Men. And so on through the animal and vegetable Kingdoms, till we come to the lowest and most inorganical Parts of Matter, we shall find every where, that the several*

ral Species are linked together, and differ but in almost insensible Degrees. And when we consider the infinite Power and Wisdom of the Maker, we have reason to think, that the Species of Creatures should also by gentle Degrees ascend upwards towards his infinite Perfection, as we see they gradually descend from us downwards, we being in Degrees of Perfection much more remote from the infinite Being of God, than we are from the lowest State of Being, and that which approaches nearest to Nothing, l. 3. c. 6. §. 12. p. 262. So again, finding in all Parts of the Creation that fall under human Observation, there is a gradual Connexion of one with another, without any great or discernible Gaps between, in all that great Variety of Things we see in the World, which are so closely linked together, that in the several Ranks of Beings it is not easy to discover the Bounds betwixt them, we have reason to be persuaded, that by such gentle Steps Things ascend upwards in Degrees of Perfection. 'Tis a hard matter to say where Sensible and Rational begin, and where Insensible and Irrational end. If we compare the Understanding and Abilities of some Men and some Brutes, we shall find so little Difference, that 'twill be hard to say, that that of Man is either clearer or larger. Observing such gradual and gentle Descents downwards, the Rule of Analogy may make it probable that it is so also in things above us; and that there are several Ranks of intelligent Beings, excelling us in several Degrees of Perfection, ascending upwards towards the infinite Perfection of the Creator by gentle Steps and Differences, that are every one at no great Distance from the next to it, l. 4 c. 16. §. 13. p. 402.

It is evident that Mr. Locke believed there was a Climax up to Heaven, but confesses the first Link of the Chain broke, the Existence of Spirits  
not

not being knowable but by Revelation; a Chasm was made, and Reason at the End of its Tether. The Inferences he draws from the superficial Knowledge we have of Body and its Qualities, are, that we must of Necessity have much less of Spirits: *Whoever considers how hardly Sensation is in our Thoughts reconcilable to extended Matter; or Existence to any Thing that hath no Extension at all, will confess, that he is very far from certainly knowing what his Soul is; 'tis a Point which seems to be put out of the Reach of our Knowledge. 'Tis past Controversy we have something within us which thinks, but must content ourselves in the Ignorance of what Kind of Being it is, l. 4. c. 3. §. 6. p. 324.*

As we have no certain Information, not even of the Existence of other Spirits, but by Revelation, they being naturally beyond our Discovery, id. §. 27. p. 333. it will follow, that whatever Mr. Locke has said of spiritual Beings, or any Ranks of Intelligences above us, was from Revelation; consequently that to Reason there must be a great Gap which will prevent its ascending upwards, to the remote and infinite Being of God, who in the Excellency of his Nature farther surpasses the purest Seraphim, than the Soul of Man does the most contemptible Insect.

*Fourthly,* Let us take notice of the Method Mr. Locke lays down, as absolutely necessary to come at Knowledge.

*The Mind in all its Thoughts and Reasonings hath no other immediate Object but its own Ideas, so that all our Knowledge is conversant about them, l. 4. c. 1. §. 1. p. 313. And we can have no Knowledge farther than we can have Perception of the Agreement or Disagreement of our Ideas, id. c. 3. §. 1. p. 322. So that a Man is only said to know a Proposition, when he evidently perceives the Agreement or Disagreement*

*Disagreement of the Terms whereof it consists, id. c. 1. §. 8. p. 315. To connect these Terms together is the Office of Reason, which principally consists in Sagacity and Illation; by the one it finds out, and by the other it so orders intermediate Ideas, as to discover what Connexion there is in each Link of the Chain, whereby the Extremes are held together; and thereby, as it were, to draw into View the Truth sought for, which is called Illation or Inference; and consists of nothing but the Perception of the Connexion there is between the Ideas in each Step of the Deduction, whereby the Mind comes to see, either the certain Agreement or Disagreement of any two Ideas, as in Demonstration, in which it arrives at Knowledge; for Reason perceives the necessary and indubitable Connexion of all the Ideas or Proofs one to another, in each Step of Demonstration that produces Knowledge, l. 4. c. 17. §. 2. p. 404. 2dly, Inference is nothing but by virtue of one Proposition laid down as true, to draw in another as true; that is, to see the Connexion of the two Ideas: It being by virtue of the perceived Agreement of the intermediate Idea, or medius terminus, with the Extremes, that the Extremes are concluded to agree. Therefore every intermediate Idea must be such, as in the whole Chain hath a visible Connexion with those two it is placed between; or else thereby the Conclusion cannot be inferred, or drawn in; for wherever any Link of the Chain is loose, and without Connexion, there the whole Strength of it is lost, it hath no Force to infer, or draw in any thing, id. §. 4. p. 407.*

We may therefore look upon these two Points as the Ground-work of Knowledge, 1st, *That wherever we want Ideas, our reasoning Stops, we are at an End of our Reckoning, l. 4. c. 17. §. 9. p. 413. 2dly, That in Demonstration, the Connexion of intermediate Proofs must be observed, and seen in each Step*

*of*

*of that whole Train, and retained in the Memory, just as it is; and the Mind must be sure, that no Part of what is necessary be omitted or overlooked, id. §. 15. p. 414. For where the Mind discovers not this, it remains in Ignorance, or at most can go no farther than a probable Conjecture, id. c. 2. §. 3. p. 137. The highest Degree of which amounts not to Certainty, without which there can be no true Knowledge, id. c. 3. §. 14. It is in this as in the reckoning of Numbers, wherever it fails, a Gap is made, the Chain breaks, and the Progress can go no farther, l. 2. c. 16. §. 7. p. 107.*

I come in the LAST PLACE to shew, that, by the Rules of Mr. Locke's Philosophy, it is not possible for the human Intellect to come at the Knowledge of God, by a Contemplation of those two principal Mediums, the Soul of Man, or the Works of Creation.

Concerning the former I shall offer this Proposition.

Where the Mind has no Idea of a Thing, it has no Knowledge, nor can infer any Truth therefrom. But the Mind has no Idea of the Soul. Therefore, &c.

The Major appears from the last Section; that the Mind has no Object of its Thoughts and Reasonings but its Ideas.—It can have no Knowledge farther than its Ideas.—Where there are no Ideas, there can be no Perception of their Agreement or Connexion; Therefore no Illation of any Truth.—The Progress can go no farther.

To prove the Minor; let us for Brevity sake define the Soul to be a thinking Substance. 1st, *Of Substance we have no distinct Idea, none at all; it is but a supposed, I know not what, to support those Ideas we call Accidents, l. 2. c. 23. §. 15. p. 164. or the Qualities we find existing, which are*  
capable

capable of producing Simple Ideas in us : It is something we know not, have no distinct Idea of it ; are perfectly ignorant of it, and in the dark, id. §. 2. p. 159. *A Man does not know the Substance of that thinking Thing, no more than he knows the Substance of a solid Thing*, id. §. 23. p. 166. *that is, not at all : For we have no clear Idea or Notion, either of corporeal or thinking Substance*, Id. §. 5. 2dly, To this something we have no Idea or Knowledge of, we must join the Quality and Idea of Thinking, of which also we have no Idea : *For we know not how we think*, id. §. 23. p. 166. *The Matter of Fact is clear, but to know how it is done we are at a loss*, id. §. 25. p. 167. *nor wherein Thinking consists*, l. 4. c. 3. §. 6. p. 323. *nor whether it be the Action or Essence of the Soul*, l. 2. c. 19. §. 4. p. 120. From Substance and Operation we know nothing of, nor can have a Simple Idea, we are to form the Complex one. *That a Spirit is something capable of thinking*, l. 2. c. 23. §. 3. p. 159. yet are ignorant of both Terms in the Proposition, Spirit and Thinking ; for Knowledge is confined to Ideas ; consequently, *we are very far from certainly knowing what the Soul is, 'tis a Point out of the reach of our Knowledge*, l. 4. c. 3. §. 6. p. 324. *A Spirit is something capable of thinking, yet we know not what it is*, l. 2. c. 23. §. 3. p. 159. *You find indeed that you do think, and so do I. But how Substance thinks, is beyond our Capacity to conceive.* (3d. Answer to the Bishop of Worcester.) 3dly, If to Thinking we add the Property of Willing or voluntary Self-motion, why a Thought in the Mind causes Motion in one Hand, and Rest in the other ; though conscious of such a Power, we cannot (as has been shewn) have any Idea. *For how Motion is produced, is to us unintelligible,*



*intelligible, l. 4. c. 10. §. 19. p. 379. We know that our Souls have a Power of exciting Motion by Thought, but if we enquire how it is done, we are totally in the dark, l. 2. c. 23. §. 28 p. 168. The Operation of Spirit upon Matter is utterly inconceivable, l. 4. c. 3. §. 28. p. 334. How any Thought should produce Motion in the Body, is as remote from the Nature of our Ideas, as how any Body should produce Thought in the Mind, Id.*

Now, where we are totally ignorant and in the dark concerning the Nature, Substance, and Qualities of any Thing; neither knowing what they are, nor how they are, nor wherein they consist: That we can have no Ideas, where no ideas are, none at all: That we can have no Knowledge where no Knowledge is, that no Illation can be made, or any other Truth drawn in, is as clear a Demonstration, upon Mr. Locke's Principles, as any in his Philosophy.

So little is there in a Shew of Words, *That the Idea of a spiritual Substance is as clear as that of a bodily Substance, l. 2. c. 23. §. 15. p. 164. i. e. none at all; and putting to it the Ideas of Thinking and Willing, of which we have no Ideas, and we have the Idea of an immaterial Spirit, i. e. we may from no Ideas, by Ideas of Reflexion, gain an Idea of we know not what, therefore can have no Idea of, being ignorant what Immateriality as well as Spirit is. Nay Mr. Locke found no Arguments to prove the Soul either immaterial or immortal. For he who will give himself leave to consider freely, will scarce find his Reason able to determine him fixedly for or against the Soul's Immateriality, l. 4. c. 3 §. 6. p. 324. it being impossible for us by the Contemplation of our own Ideas, without Revelation, to discover whether Omnipotence has not given to some Systems of Mat-*

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*ter, fitly disposed, a Power to perceive and think, Id. p. 323. And, in his third Answer to the Bishop of Worcester, he shews at large that the Immortality of the Soul is not to be proved or known by natural Reason. Yet all the great Ends of Morality and Religion are well enough secured without Philosophical Proofs of the Soul's Immateriality, Id. p. 324. This is giving up the Cause, by putting the Subject out of the reach of Philosophical or Rational Enquiry ; and he would have saved himself a great deal of Trouble, and many Inconsistencies, to have said, We know nothing of spiritual Subjects, but by Revelation : And whatever Ends are well enough served without it, I am sure they are not the Ends of Religion or Truth ; though those of Morality (in its Modern Sense) apparently are. Yet I will not say Mr. Locke formed his Hypothesis for the sake of it.*

To illustrate this Matter farther, if it be said, we may ground some Reasonings, Proofs, or Ideas, on the Operations of Spirits, as we judge of Bodies by their Primary Qualities ; I answer, Not : *For if we are at a loss in respect to the Powers and Operations of Bodies, much more so must we be in reference to Spirits, whereof we naturally have no Ideas, but what we draw from reflecting on the Operations of our own Souls within us ; which may hold but an inconsiderable Rank among the possibly innumerable Kinds of noble Beings, l. 4. c. 3. §. 17. p. 328. For as to the Operations of Spirits in thinking and moving of Bodies, all our Discoveries beyond sensible Matter of Fact amount to very little beyond perfect Ignorance and Incapacity, Id. c. 6. §. 14. p. 353. And bating some very few, and those superficial Ideas of Spirits, which by Reflexion we get of our own, and from hence the best we can collect, of the Nature of Spirits ;*

*we have no certain Information, so much as of the Existence of other Spirits, but by Revelation, Id. c. 3. §. 27. p. 333.*

Is not God plainly exempted here for the sake of an Hypothesis, and the Approach to him by Reason made very obvious, tho' not to an Angel or Creature, but by Revelation? By the same Rule of Inconsistency a Part is bigger than the whole. But whoever will impartially examine this Account, must find it unworthy of Mr. *Locke*, of Philosophy, of Religion. From a very few superficial Ideas, by reflecting on Operations whereof we have no Ideas, of our Soul which holds an inconsiderable Rank among the Kinds of nobler Beings, we collect the best we can, *i. e. well enough*, of the Father of Spirits, though of Spirits we naturally have no Ideas. No farther Comment need be made, than that from superficial Ideas of an inconsiderable Thing, a very superficial and inconsiderable Knowledge can be attained, which, though it would be Blasphemy to apply it to God, who is not to be known superficially, yet will serve *well enough*.

An equal Difficulty is yet behind: How by the Help of a very few superficial Ideas we shall pass the vast Chasm between the human Soul and God. For *he is infinitely more remote in the real Excellency of his Nature, from the highest and perfectest of all created Beings, than the purest Seraphim is from the most contemptible Piece of Matter, l. 3. c. 6. §. 11. p. 262.* There are no intermediate Steps or Ideas, by Mr *Locke's* own Confession, which Reason can place in a clear and fit Order, to pass the immense Gulph, and perceive the Connexion between the two Extremes: And if there be but one Gap in the Chain, the Mind must stop, it can go no farther,

there is an End of Certainty and Knowledge. Were there indeed certain Degrees of Perfections and Beings, ascending upwards by gentle Steps and Differences, at no great distance one from another ; there might be some Grounds for imagining a finite Mind able to clamber up towards a View of infinite Perfection. But Mr. *Locke* every where declares there are no such discoverable middle Terms, no Links to connect the Chain, whereby the Extremes are to be held together, or on which such Deductions and Conclusions as produce Knowledge can depend ; no Discernment of the Agreement or Disagreement which may be between them ; therefore *Reason is here at an End of its Reckoning.*

*For of Spirits we have naturally no Ideas, l. 4. c. 3. §. 17. p. 328. The Existence of Spirits is not knowable but by Revelation, Id. c. 11. §. 12. p. 384. What we hope to know of separate Spirits in this World, we must, I think, expect only from Revelation, Id. c. 12. §. 12. p. 390. For we have no certain Information so much as of the Existence of other Spirits, but by Revelation. Angels of all sorts are naturally beyond our discovery : of Intelligences, whereof 'tis likely there are many Orders, our natural Faculties can give us no certain account at all, Id. c. 3. §. 27. p. 333. That there are Degrees of Spiritual Beings between us and the great God, who is there that by his own search and ability can come to know ? And in what concerns their different Species and Properties, we are under an absolute Ignorance, Id. p. 334. Where then we have no Ideas, simple, complex, or intermediate, that there we cannot connect the infinitely distant Extremes, nor Reason ascend to the Knowledge of God by any Contemplation of the Soul, is a clear Demonstration, by Mr. *Locke's* own Rules and Method of Argumentation.*

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The Definition of Knowledge is the Perceiving an Agreement or Disagreement of Ideas; where there are no Ideas, there can be no Knowledge. We have no Idea of Spirits,—nor of the Operations of our own Souls—consequently not of the Father of Spirits— We have no Ideas of either Extreme, therefore can have no Knowledge. For the whole Extent of our Knowledge reaches not beyond our own Ideas, limited to the ways of our Perception, l. 3. c. 11. §. 13. p. 308.

When Mr. *Locke* therefore affirms, *That no Man inspired by God, can by Revelation communicate to others any new simple Ideas, which they had not before from Sensation or Reflexion*, l. 4. c. 18. §. 3. p. 417. it is a big founding Expression, without any meaning to the Purpose it is offer'd. Ideas of Reflexion are grounded on those of Sensation, therefore ultimately to be resolved into them — It is also certain that God can open and enable our Faculties to discern new Objects, hitherto unseen and unknown to the mortal Mind, from which they would collect new simple Ideas. And he allows, that Notices of such Beings may be communicated to us, with such Peculiarities of their Nature, as distinguish them from all others, and help us to form some inadequate Notion of them. Thus, Spirits, Angels, and Intelligences are naturally beyond our discovery. *Yet they are so made out to us, that we believe them, not by Deductions of Reason, but as coming from God in some extraordinary manner*, Id. §. 2. Upon which Information it is, Mr. *Locke* undertakes to shew what Ideas we may form of Spirits; the Truth of which Ideas must consist in their Conformity to the Manner wherein they were originally described; and that by Analogy to those Ideas the Mind has already received, which only can be from Sensation. By the same extraordinary way of Communication,  
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we come to know there are Angels or Spirits, by the same we know there is a Father of Spirits, *i. e.* God.

I come now to the SECOND Medium, whereby the Knowledge of God is said to be plain and obvious, *viz.* from contemplating the Works of Creation.

In this Argument as well as the other, it is a misfortune to the learned World, that Mr. *Locke* always takes the most important Points for granted, without ever once entering on such Proofs as unassisted Reason would have used, to deduce and perceive the Certainty of them; as if an *ipse dixit* from the *Pythagoras* of the Moderns were sufficient. Thus, *A common settled Opinion and received Doctrine serves well enough to our present purpose, and leaves this past doubt, that the Creation or Beginning of any one Substance out of nothing, being once admitted, the Creation of all other, but the Creator himself, may with the same ease be supposed, l. 4. c. 10. §. 18. p. 379.*

Does this serve well enough for the Purposes of Reason? Or is this Philosophy, to take common Opinion for Proof, and admit the only Point that wants Establishment, as an easy Supposition without an Argument to support it? We must first scientifically know a Creation, before we can a Creator. This Mr. *Locke* knew was impossible to be done; therefore he wisely passes by, and waves the Undertaking. Yet whence was this common Opinion, or received Doctrine? If from the discovery of Reason, he would have known, and pointed out the Procedure; for such Knowledge does not spring up like Mushrooms, by the natural Fecundity of the Mind. If not one Step of that Sagacity and Illation whereby Reason could have made the discovery, appears; it must have proceeded from  
some

some other Cause, *i. e.* from Revelation. And who ever attempted to prove the Creation of a Fly or Pebble out of nothing, possible? No Philosopher ever thought of, or believed it; therefore no immediate Object of the human Intellect.

Let us observe with what Darkneſs he imagines the Subject to be ſurrounded. *Poſſibly if we could emancipate our ſelves from vulgar Notions, and raiſe our Thoughts as far as they could reach, to a cloſer Contemplation of Things, we might be able to aim at ſome dim and ſeeming Conception, how Matter might at firſt be made and begin to exiſt by the Power of that eternal firſt Being: But to give Beginning and Being to a Spirit, would be found a more inconceivable Effect of omnipotent Power,* l. 4. c. 10. §. 18. p. 378. If Mr. Locke could not emancipate himſelf to raiſe a dim Conception, it may juſtly to all others be allowed inconceivable, which he ſufficiently intimates. For let a Philoſopher but explain *why his Will or Thought ſhould cauſe Reſt in one Hand, and Motion in the other, ſo as to make it intelligible, and the next Step will be to underſtand Creation,* Id. §. 19. p. 379. For if we know not the Operation of our own Will, how ſhould we underſtand the Volition of Omnipotence? It is therefore *over-valuing our ſelves, to conclude all Things impoſſible to be done, whoſe Manner of doing exceeds our Comprehension: this is to make our Comprehension Infinite, or God Finite, when what he can do, is limited to what we can conceive of it,* Id. Here again Mr. Locke argues againſt Scepticks and Atheiſts, and very juſtly, the Subject not ſubmitting to any other Proof or Argument. If a Man cannot underſtand, why Thought ſhould make one Hand write, the other ſtop, why ſhould he inſiſt upon

a demonstrative Proof of the Manner of Creation? They both exceed our Comprehension.

But to come to the Demonstration I promised, that the Mind cannot come at the Knowledge of God from contemplating the Works of Creation; it is this.

To know the Truth of any Proposition, we must find out intermediate Ideas; to shew the Agreement or Disagreement of the Ideas or Terms, as expressed in the Proposition to be demonstrated.

But in this Proposition, God created Matter, no intermediate Ideas can be found out, whereby the Extremes can be connected or concluded to agree.

Therefore the Truth of that Proposition cannot by any Act of Reason be known or demonstrated.

The Major is every where established for Mr. Locke as the Foundation of all Knowledge, See Section the fourth, and l. 4. c. 7. §. 11. p. 360.

The Minor is thus demonstrated. *Creation is when a new Particle of Matter begins to exist, which before had no Being*, l. 2. c. 26. §. 2. p. 177. The Extremes here are Existence ——— Nonexistence. Nothing ——— Something. The Question then is, what intermediate Ideas or Proofs there are to connect them together, so that the Mind may perceive a necessary and indubitable Agreement between them, *which must be observed and seen in each Step of the whole Train, and retained in the Memory, just as it is*, l. 4. c. 17. §. 15. p. 414. Mr. Locke answers, *That Creation and Annihilation contain in them no Idea of the Action or Manner whereby they are produced, but only of the Cause and the Thing done*, l. 2. c. 22. §. 11. p. 158. For in Creation, *tho' the Word seems to express*



*express some Action, yet it signifies nothing of Action, or modus operandi at all, but barely the Effect, Id.* If no Step in the Agency can be traced, if there be no Idea of the Action or Manner of it, of consequence there can be no *Medius Terminus*, whereby the Extremes may be connected, or the Agreement between the Cause and the Thing done perceived. This is the vast *Hiatus*, Chasm, or Gap, from Nothing to Something, which no Reason could ever pass, but that All-wise Intelligence, whose *modus operandi* was known or conceivable to himself only.

Therefore a Creator cannot be inferred or demonstrated from the Works of Creation. *For a Man can never be said to know a Proposition, but when he evidently perceives the Agreement or Disagreement of the Ideas whereof it consists, l. 4. c. 1. § 8. p. 315.* And Inference is by virtue of intermediate Ideas to perceive the Connexion of the Extremes; where this fails, the Chain breaks, Reason is at a stand, and the Mind remains in Ignorance. This again I lay down for as clear a Demonstration upon Mr. *Locke's Principles*, as any in his Works.

That there can be no intermediate Ideas, appears also from the very Nature and Act of Creation. For where the Act is momentaneous, *He spake, and it was done*, the Transition from the Efficiency to the Effect quicker than Thought, without any successive Motion, but the Act and Effect are indivisible, to suppose any thing intermediate, is a Contradiction. Essential Being gives being to all others by mere Volition, so immediately that all Means are excluded; and the Manner of an Act without any supposable Continuation, or Transiency of Operation, is not to be mentally conceived: There being no distance between the Will or Power and act of Omnipotence, it makes it impossible for a finite Mind to

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perceive

perceive the Manner of its Operation; and infinite Wisdom and Power are so essentially the same, that he who comprehends Creation, can create also.

On the whole, Ideas of Reflexion are of no use to us in our great Concernments; neither lead us to the Knowledge of God from considering the internal Operations of our own Souls, nor from contemplating the outward Frame of Things. Therefore to suppose them, is to no Purpose.

I shall venture to conclude what is here offer'd, from a serious Love to Truth, with the Words of Mr. *Locke*, *l. i. c. i. §. 4.* “ It is useful to  
 “ know the Extent of our Comprehension, how  
 “ far the Powers of our Understanding reach; to  
 “ what things they are in any degree proportionate,  
 “ and where they fail us. I suppose it may be of  
 “ use to prevail with the busy Mind of Man, to  
 “ be more cautious in meddling with things exceed-  
 “ ing its Comprehension; and to stop when it is  
 “ at the utmost Extent of its Tether; and to sit  
 “ down in a quiet Ignorance of those things, which  
 “ upon Examination are found to be beyond the  
 “ reach of our Capacities, — to which our Un-  
 “ derstandings are not suited; and of which we  
 “ cannot frame in our Minds any clear or distinct  
 “ Perception, or whereof perhaps we have not any  
 “ Notices at all—Were the Capacities of our Un-  
 “ derstanding well considered, the Extent of our  
 “ Knowledge, *Id. §. 7.* once discovered, and the  
 “ Horizon found, which sets the Bounds between  
 “ the enlightned and dark part of Things, between  
 “ what is and what is not comprehensible by us,  
 “ Men would perhaps with less Scruple acquiesce in  
 “ the avowed Ignorance of the one, and employ  
 “ their Thoughts and Discourse, with more Ad-  
 “ vantage and Satisfaction, in the other.

As a sure Direction to the Mind in these Enquiries, I shall add a short Aphorism out of the noblest System of Philosophy, that ever appeared in the World, and which fully states the Inlets and Extent of Human Knowledge. *Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, neither hath it entered into the Heart of Man to conceive.* What the Eye or other Senses afford not immediate Ideas of, nor the Ear mediately by Instruction communicates to the Mind, can never enter into the Heart of Man to be conceived. The deep Things of God, and all Notices we have of spiritual and immaterial Objects of Divine Knowledge, *God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit.*

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